

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02811 161057Z  
ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 SCS-06 CA-01 CPR-01 INR-10  
VO-05 HA-05 SS-15 SP-02 /060 W  
-----111337 171404Z /46  
R 160952Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8041

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E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: OGEN, PORG, PDIP, SY  
SUBJ: SYRIAN RATIFICATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION ON CONSULAR  
RELATIONS AND SYRIAN-US BILATERAL CONSULAR RELATIONS

REF: A) DAMASCUS OM OF 5/2/78; B) DAMASCUS A-26 (77)  
C) STATE 135428 (77); D) DAMASCUS A-17 (77)

1. REF OM TRANSMITTED EMBASSY'S TRANSLATION OF SYRIA'S  
RATIFICATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION ON CONSULAR RELATIONS.  
RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH FMA CONSULAR AFFAIRS HEAD CONCERNING  
INTER ALIA VIENNA CONVENTION AND SYRIA'S INTERPRETATION OF ITS  
PROVISIONS INDICATE THAT SYRIANS MAY NOW BE READY TO BEGIN  
SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS LEADING TO BILATERAL CONSULAR  
AGREEMENT WITH US. SYRIANS SEEM TO PREFER INCLUDING RECIPROCAL  
VISA POLICY IN GENERAL CONSULAR AGREEMENT RATHER THAN TREAT AS  
SEPARATE ISSUE.

2. ON MAY 4 EMBASSY'S CONSULAR OFFICER HAD LENGTHY  
DISCUSSION WITH YAHYA MAHAMID, HEAD OF MFA CONSULAR AFFAIRS  
OFFICE, CONCERNING OUTSTANDING BILATERAL CONSULAR PROBLEMS  
INCLUDING RECENT SYRIAN RATIFICATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION,  
RECIPROCAL VISA POLICY AND NOTIFICATION/ACCESS. MAHAMID  
AND HIS TWO PREDECESSORS DURING LAST TWO YEARS  
HAVE AVOIDED SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS ON QUESTIONS OF  
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NOTIFICATION/ACCESS IN ARREST CASES, RECIPROCAL VISA  
POLICY AND BEGINNING DISCUSSIONS FOR BILATERAL CONSULAR  
AGREEMENT. MAHAMID HAS ONLY BEEN IN PRESENT POSITION SIX  
MONTHS AND HIS RELUCTANCE WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO  
UNFAMILIARITY WITH JOB. ALSO, MIN. OF INTERIOR HAS  
NOT GIVEN ANY GUIDANCE TO MAHAMID OR PREDECESSOR ON  
QUESTION OF VISA RECIPROCITY.

3. MAHAMID ADMITTED THAT VIENNA CONVENTION IS WEAK IN SEVERAL AREAS, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR NOTIFICATION/ACCESS TO DETAIN CITIZENS OF SENDING POWERS. WHILE HE HAD NOT YET SEEN ANY DIRECTIVES TO POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES ON NOTIFICATION/ACCESS, HE STATED THAT HE WOULD PUSH FOR SPECIFIC GUIDELINES, ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT SECRETARY/ SECRET POLICE APPARATUS WOULD LIKELY VETO ANY DEADLINES BEING SET. HE ALSO INTIMATED THAT THESE AUTHORITIES WOULD LIBERALLY INTERPRET VIENNA CONVENTION PROVISION THAT NOTIFICATION/ACCESS DEPENDS ON CONSENT OF DETAINEE. EMBASSY HAS NOT HAD REAL TEST OF GENERAL UNDERSTANDING IN AIDE MEMOIRE RESULTING FROM SCA ADMINISTRATOR WALENTYNOWICZ VISIT OF OCTOBER 1976 (REFB).

4. MAHAMID STATED THAT BEST WAY FOR EMBASSY TO INITIATE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON VISA POLICY AND BILATERAL AT PRESENT TIME WOULD BE TO SEND FOLLOW-UP DIPLOMATIC NOTE REFERRING TO EARLIER NOTES ON THESE TWO ISSUES AND REQUESTING MFA VIEWS ON HOW TO RESOLVE THEM. MAHAMID BELIEVES THAT IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, MFA WOULD AUTHORIZE HIM TO ACCEPT DRAFT BILATERAL FOR CONSIDERATION. FEELING WITHIN MFA IS TO INCLUDE RECIPROCAL VISA POLICY IN BILATERAL AGREEMENT. IF DEPARTMENT SEES STRONG OBJECTIONS TO SUCH INCLUSION, NORMAL DELAY INVOLVED IN EXCHANGE OF PRELIMINARY NOTES SHOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR GUIDANCE, ETC. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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5. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO STUDY SYRIAN-SOVIET CONSULAR AGREEMENT TRANSMITTED REF D AS BACKGROUND TO WHAT SYRIANS HAVE AGREED TO IN PAST AND TO PROVIDE DRAFT BILATERAL FOR EMBASSY TO TRANSMIT TO MFA. DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON HOW TO HANDLE RECIPROCAL VISA POLICY ALSO NEEDED. MAHAMID WOULD LIKE TO HAVE COPY OF ANY U.S. INSTRUMENT OR ORDER IN IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF VIENNA CONVENTIONS ON CONSULAR RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY ON QUESTION OF NOTIFICATION/ACCESS.

6. COPIES OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES EXCHANGED WITH MAF TO DATE BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT UNDER COVER OF OM. PELLETREAU

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TREATY RATIFICATION, CONSULAR RELATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Number:** 1978DAMASC02811  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 DAMASCUS A-26  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
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**Review Event:**  
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**Review Release Date:** N/A  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** OGEN, PORO, PDIP, SY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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